United Nations S/2003/378

Security Council

Distr.: General
27 March 2003
English
Original: French

Letter dated 26 March 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to transmit herewith the report on the international security presence in Kosovo for the period 1-28 February 2003 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this report to the attention of the members of the Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

[Original: English]

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. Over the reporting period (1-28 February 2003) there were just over 26,600 troops of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in theatre.

Security

2. The overall security situation in Kosovo during the month of February was generally stable. The first arrests of Kosovo Albanians indicted for war crimes by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia gave rise to a number of protest rallies across the province. All of those demonstrations ended peacefully.

3. In two separate operations KFOR forces detained three people who were subsequently sent to the Tribunal in The Hague.

4. In the first operation, carried out on 11 February, KFOR detained six Kosovo Albanians in Feriza for the illegal possession of weapons. Five of them, including an active member of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), were released after questioning. However, Isak Musliu, a former KPS officer and former member of UCK, remained in custody.

5. In the second search operation, carried out on 17 February, KFOR detained Haradin Baja and Agim Murtezi. The three persons subsequently transferred to The Hague had been commanders or guards at the Lapusanik prison camp in Glogovac. All of them had been indicted for war crimes committed against Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs in the period from May to July 1998 while serving in UCK. Murtezi was released by the Tribunal on 28 February after proof had been provided of mistaken identity. All charges against him were dropped.

6. The criminal trial of four members of the former UCK began in Pristina on 17 February, and is expected to last for three months. The indictees are charged with crimes committed against the ethnic Albanian population from September 1998 to August 1999.

7. On 7 February, two incidents were reported in the northern Mitrovica area and in the Vitina area, when grenades were thrown at the properties of minority groups in ethnically mixed areas. Four people were injured in one of those attacks. Although investigations are continuing into the two cases, the attacks are believed to be isolated incidents.

8. KFOR continued to carry out Kosovo-wide search operations in its campaign against weapons smuggling and terrorist activities. During the period under review, KFOR seized a large amount of weapons and ammunition. Items confiscated during the month included 154 assorted weapons; 224 grenades and mines; and 7,672 rounds of ammunition.

Border/boundary security

9. KFOR continued to monitor border and boundary security, and reported that the number of persons attempting to cross borders illegally decreased during the reporting period.

10. Following the report of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the Coordination Centre for Southern Serbia that extremists in the Kosovska Kamenica and Gnjilane areas were readying themselves to move towards Bujanovac and Presevo, the head of the Centre increased the combat readiness of Serb security forces on the Serb side of the Administrative Boundary Line bordering the Presevo Valley. He requested KFOR and UNMIK to take similar measures. Consequently, on 11 February, KFOR began supporting UNMIK to increase security measures at the Administrative Boundary Line with Serbia to prevent any possible incidents.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

11. The security forces of Serbia and Montenegro continued to remain in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Military Technical Agreement.

12. Two unannounced roll-calls of several units of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) located in three protection zones were held on 20 and 25 February. Of a total establishment strength of 621 KPC members, 265 were found to be absent, 25 of them without permission. The high absence rate of 42 per cent is considered to be unacceptable. As a consequence, the UNMIK office of the KPC Coordinator with the Commander of KPC has issued a policy directive emphasizing that the minimum required availability of KPC personnel is 75 per cent. Proposals have been put forward for the dismissal of 12 KPC members for unauthorized absence.

13. Sixteen cases of non-compliance were reported in February. Incidents include 14 cases of absenteeism, one of threats to witnesses, and one for the use of unauthorized symbols. Sixty-seven cases remain open. One of these includes a case involving the Commander of Protection Zone 1, Bashkim Jashari, for offences committed against KFOR, UNMIK and the police services. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General is considering a proposal for Jashari's dismissal from KPC or suspension for at least four months.

Cooperation with international organizations

14. KFOR continues to provide assistance, on request, to international organizations and non-governmental organizations working throughout Kosovo, and to provide security assistance in support of UNMIK police operations.

Outlook

15. The overall security situation in Kosovo is considered to be improving slowly.